

REMARKS

Please introduce the amended claims prior to calculation of fees and examination of the subject application. The claims have been amended to remove multiple dependencies, to conform various claims to US practice, and to provide antecedent basis for various terms in the claims.

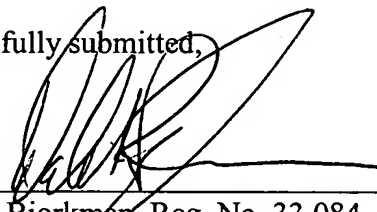
Claim 1 has been amended to recite the ratios of the components illite clay : smectic clay : attapulgite. Antecedent basis for this amendment is found at page 6, line 13. Original claim 29 has been converted from a "use" claim to a method claim, and is supported throughout the specification, particularly at page 7, line 10 to page 8, line 16, which discusses the intended effects of the coating material on the porous body; and page 9, line 17 to page 10, line 13, which discusses the desired rheological properties of the coating material. It is respectfully submitted that these amendments do not introduce new matter.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request consideration and examination of the application in view of the amendments made in this Preliminary Amendment.

In the event that a phone conference between the Examiner and the Applicant's undersigned attorney would help resolve any issues in the application, the Examiner is invited to contact said attorney at (651) 275-9811.

Respectfully submitted,



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